

Near the Cross Emmaus



August 2012
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WALK #25 LAY DIRECTOR — JIM MARKLEY

After being raised in Southern New England, Jim Markley later resided in Tennessee and Georgia and then settled in Arkansas in 1994 where he is now the Co-Founder and Chief Executive officer of MarPar LLC in Jonesboro. Markley attended the Walk to Emmaus on Walk #7 at the NEAR the Cross in 2007.

Since attending the Walk, he has served on the Agape Support Team and also as a Assistant Table Leader, Table Leader and an Assistant Lay Director.

“Each Walk is like peeling an onion,” says Markley. “Each Walk has layers and layers of meaning.”

Jim currently serves as Chairman on the NEAR the Cross Emmaus Board and continues help grow our community by sponsoring and co-sponsoring over 12 pilgrims since his Walk. Markley believes that helping to train leaders for the local church is important work for each of us to do. He stays connected with the Emmaus community by Participating in two weekly reunion groups: Centurions

and Proverbs 27:17.

“Since my pilgrim walk my life has changed dramatically for the better. Now I think of life as pre-walk and post-walk. As far back as I can remember, I have had a relationship with God. After my pilgrim walk, my relationship with God has grown exponentially. Emmaus tells us that we are the “hands and feet of God.” He is counting on me and I am counting on Him”

Jim and his wife, Gale, have three sons and one daughter. They have one grandchild and are expecting the second in August 2012.

WALK #26 LAY DIRECTOR — SHELLY FULKS

Shelly Fulks signed up for the NEAR the Cross Walk #12 after her sponsor, Liz Cato, told her that she deserved to go. After the Walk, Shelly said “I felt like living again. I had felt like I had a purpose. That life hadn’t ended and I WAS loved and could continue.”

If it were not for Emmaus she believes she would not be playing as active of a role in her church as she now does.

Shelly currently serves on the Emmaus Board and has also continued to be involved in the Emmaus community by serving on Agape and Kitchen Support Teams as well as

an Assistant Table Leader, Table Leader, Assistant Lay Director and Board Representative in the Conference Room on Emmaus Walks.

“I have seen miracles happen and felt love that is unexplainable,” Fulks explains about serving on Emmaus teams.

Between Walks, Shelly stays connected with Christ and her Emmaus community through the Delta Doves reunion group that meets monthly and Daddy’s Favorite Girls, her weekly reunion group.

Since attending the Walk to Emmaus, she has sponsored

several pilgrims because she feels everyone deserves to feel the love and teachings of the Emmaus experience.

“Sponsorship is the single most important thing you can do for Emmaus!”

Shelly and her husband, Steve, reside in Gosnell. They have two daughters. Amie, forever 16, has a spirit that will fill a room, even now as she does it from Heaven. And Gracie, 9 years old, who is the joy of her life.

She has an Associates in Teaching and is working on a Ministry degree to become Ordained and a Licensed Christian Counselor.

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 4

Gathering & Potluck
FUMC-Jonesboro 12:00

August 10-11

Conference Room
Training
Walks #25 & #26
Cornerstone UMC

August 25

Conference Room &
Support Team Training
Walks #25 & #26
Cornerstone UMC

***A gathering will not be held in September due to upcoming Walks.**

September 13-16

Walk #25
LD: Jim Markley

September 20-23

Walk #26
LD: Shelly Fulks

October 6

Follow-Up for Pilgrims
of Walks #25 & #26

Potluck & Gathering
FUMC-Jonesboro

Help Us Find Addresses

These email addresses have been returned.
If you know their correct address, email:
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PREPARATIONS FOR FALL WALKS UNDERWAY

Team trainings afford opportunities to make new friends, to preview talks, to express joys and concerns and to live in the love of Christ. They are a training ground in which team members grow in faith and learn to cooperate.

From the first meeting, each team member should consider what is happening on the team and why it is happening. Thinking about the team is not criticism, but discernment. We study the Emmaus experience and begin to understand its dynamics and purposes. We allow the Spirit to reveal God's power and love as God uses the Walk to Emmaus to change lives and the world.

One purpose of all team meetings is to experience God's grace and love. Another is to mold the team members into one body of Christ so that they can represent Christ to new pilgrims.

On Saturday, July 28th team members for Walks #25 & #26 gathered together for Orientation at First United Methodist Church in Jonesboro.

During the morning session, NEAR the Cross Board members discussed the importance of following the Emmaus guidelines on Walks and described each position on the Support and Conference Room teams.

Teams were then anointed for the Walks and gathered for communion before dismissing for break.

The afternoon sessions consisted of breakout groups among teams to discuss in detail their roles on the Walk weekend and to begin team bonding among members.

The Conference Room teams for both Walks will meet again in a couple of weeks to continue to bond and preview upcoming talks for the Fall Walks. During the last weekend of August, Support Team members and Conference Team members will all meet once again for a final training session before the Fall Walks.

NEAR THE CROSS

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**PILGRIM APPLICATIONS
NEEDED ASAP!
PLEASE FILL OUT
PILGRIM AND SPONSOR
APPLICATIONS AND
SEND TO REGISTRAR,
BOB ROGERS**

4th Day Talk

4th Day Talk

Linda Ford speaks at Candlelight

My name is Linda Ford, Noah's of Ark Walk to Emmaus #2, table of Mary.

As I am quickly approaching 60 years of age, I have decided you have to be able to do two things to make it through every day's trials and challenges. You have to pray and have to laugh. I also believe the Lord has a sense of humor and laughs.

I feel I am determined, although my mother uses the word stubborn, so when my husband died almost 2½ years ago, I went back to work less than a week after his funeral. I knew I had to get those kids ready for end of course tests and catch up on everything I hadn't done when I was with Joe at the hospital. And I was not going to let the kids see one tear fall down my face.

I teach what used to be called Home Economics. If you are politically correct, now it's Family and Consumer Science. The first day I was back I taught an awesome class to my kids in Clothing. Two hours later, my Clothing class walked into my room. Some of the kids had been in the earlier class, that was NOT Clothing. I asked them why they didn't tell me I was teaching the wrong subject? Their reply was they didn't want to make me cry. Bless their hearts, they were watching out for me and were not going to let anything make me cry that first day back.

Joe always made a big deal out of Valentine's Day. He had died only 2 weeks before and I thought I had myself ready for the moment when the cheerleaders would bring Valentine presents to the students in my class at the last of the day. Gifts are delivered to the auditorium to avoid disturbance of classes. Cheerleaders do not deliver anything to classrooms until the last hour. If you think any learning goes on after the door opens and a cheerleader walks in with arms full, you are dreaming. You would be doing good to be able to see all the students amid the sea of balloons, candy, stuffed animals and flowers.

I told myself that when the cheerleaders showed up I would remember all the Valentine presents Joe had sent in the years we were together. I was going to be strong and not cry a tear. As the cheerleaders walked into my class, kids grabbed presents they knew

were coming to them. Then they got quiet, really quiet, not a reassuring sound to a teacher when it comes out of the blue. The last cheerleader came in with 18 red roses and kept walking to the front of the room until the only person left in front of her was me. She handed me the vase, I looked at the card and my tears started flowing. A student of mine who had lost her mother just a couple of months earlier to the very same kind of cancer that Joe had, sent me the flowers. I felt the Lord was telling me to hang in there even if I didn't have Joe's arms around me here on earth, I wasn't alone.

I got through the first year with all the horrible "firsts" without Joe. I knew after that, it was going to be so much easier. Can you hear the Lord laughing? I couldn't then, but I am sure He was.

In the 14 years Joe had been sick, we made many hospital runs. After I turned him over to the doctors, I would find a quiet place and tell the Lord I was giving Him Joe. I wanted to take him back home, I wasn't ready to tell Joe goodbye but it was up to Him. Until the doctors told me we were checking out of the hospital, Joe was His, not mine.

After Joe died, I kept having a hard time with the concept of praying. Not actually doing it, just hearing people talking about the Lord healing people because they prayed and asked. I wanted to stomp my feet and ask them, "were my prayers not good enough for Joe to be healed and live?" No, to be honest, I didn't think it; I actually did it in Sunday school. I felt like Joe was healed but his healing didn't include living, that all of my prayers answered had been within the Lord's will. I decided when someone talked about their prayers being automatically answered, I would talk to the Lord about my feelings later and not stomp my feet and cry or talk out loud.

I never stopped praying. My prayers were thanking the Lord for all I had in my life, praise for His wonders that He enabled me to see and experience. I had lots of conversations about the biggest difference of opinion the Lord and I have always

had. I am thankful for how much Linda Sue is able to handle. We don't agree on the amount, never have. Yes, I can hear Him laughing again, right now.

I got used to living alone again and got back into the work routine. Then last summer I had to have 3 out-patient surgeries on each of my knees, hoping to put off getting new knees for a year or two longer. I had been doing this twice a year for several years and never had reactions to the procedures, till last summer. I had a bad reaction, putting me on crutches till it was almost time to go back to work.

Then Mother called me at 5:15 one morning, wanting to know if I would take her to the doctor at 9:00. I lovingly told her if she called me at 5:15 a.m. I would take her to the ER, not to the doctor at 9:00. She's had cancer twice plus heart surgery. She had the choice of getting dressed by the time I drove the 2 blocks to her house or she could go in her gown and robe.

Some of you know mother. She has many more filters between her mouth and brain than I do and I am the daughter who is the least like her. Between that morning and the end of school, we did a couple of ER runs, saw a specialist in Little Rock and had out-patient surgery in Little Rock. All the time I was asking God if he was sure I could do this. I thought He had too much confidence in me again!

"Please Lord, not so soon after I lost Joe; I know I'm not that strong." I had been staying with mother at night for several weeks, then moved in and found a sitter to stay with her while I was at school. We had been looking toward her 90th birthday at the end of August. Less than a week before her birthday party, she woke me up, already dressed and said she was afraid it was her heart; we might need to do an ER run. When we got through with the testing I had spent the night in the hospital and knew she was getting to come back home.

I smiled and told her I had been working all summer planning her birthday party and she could come in her new dress or in a hospital gown with an IV hooked up, laying on a gurney, but she was going to be at that party one way or the other. She chose the new dress. I thanked God all the way home from Searcy that I was going to get to see her at the party and both embarrass and surprise her with a PowerPoint of pictures of her life, telling everyone how awesome we thought she was.

By the first of the year, Mother wanted to see how she would do staying at home by herself, so I am back at my house every night now.

At school, my (continued on next page)

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Classrooms are on the second floor, the opposite end of the building from the parking lot. My knees are bone on bone so when they are hurting really badly and I have lots of stuff to carry to my rooms, I use the service elevator. The elevator and I are not friends. The last count of the times it was stopped with me in it is past 20. Sometimes it starts working again in a few minutes. One time I had 20 minutes or so to talk to the Lord till it started working again. That Sunday afternoon, in the elevator with me, I had groceries for 90 kids in 4 classes to cook the next day, and, of course, there wasn't another person in the whole school campus.

I got stuck one morning and thought I was close enough to the second floor to climb out, so after a quick prayer that nothing would show up on YouTube that night, I climbed out using my foot on the arm rail till I could squirm out on my back into the hall. The school gets the repair man there every time, and he adjusts and works on it, but that elevator doesn't like me!

I walked the stairs and kept praying until the pain kicked in again, and I would break down and ride that thing. Last time, a student saw me forcing the door

open but not coming out and got another teacher. A teacher and a couple of students grabbed my hands and pulled me up and out the shaft, managing to keep straight faces!. The elevator doesn't like me but every time the Lord was stuck in it with me. I wasn't alone. After kicking the elevator and calling it a bad name, I am back on strengthening my knees and praying other places.

I am at the point in my journey now that I am not afraid to be extremely honest with the Lord. He made me so I am sure He can handle me asking Him questions that Mother wouldn't think were tactful. Then something happened and I reached the place in my life that I decided I was going to continue to have challenges but I wasn't going to let them keep me down. I was going to face them and laugh while getting on with living the life I have.

That was about one week before spring break. During spring break I went to Social Security with some paperwork and laughed when they asked me if I really wasn't divorced from Joe, not even living with him when he died. They politely asked me if I was trying to commit fraud against the government. I told him I hadn't divorced him and I wasn't living with him the last month of his life because he was in ICU

on a vent and I was next door living in the family waiting room 24/7 at the hospital. Our wedding license and Joe's death certificate saying I was his widow weren't enough to suit him. He decided I needed to make an appointment and come back later.

They called a few days later saying they would decide if I was Joe's widow in 6 to 8 weeks. I looked up toward Heaven and told the Lord I was letting him deal with Social Security. Last week, I got a letter addressed to Joe from the IRS. It was a form letter wanting him to update their records with his current address. It had to be returned in 2 weeks and personally signed by him. I called them, listened to many menu choices and finally got to a live person and told them I was Joe's widow and didn't know the zip code for Heaven. I asked what she needed me to do so the IRS was up to date on Joe's address.

She asked me to hang on just long enough for her to correct the records. The 45 minutes she had me on hold gave me time to shake my head, laugh and pray, being grateful for all God's blessings and for having time for me when there are so many government agencies and machines that obviously need Him, too.

Decolores!

Sign up for Prayer Vigils for Fall Walks

www.nearthecrossemmaus.org

On left side, click Walk Dates/Prayer Vigils

Men's Walk #25 Sept 13-16

Women's Walk #26 Sept 20-23